In re BORGEN
09/916,256

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend page 5, lines 6-17 as follows:

FIG. 1 is a schematic representation of the drive system for a tandem or multi-axle vehicle including a front steerable axle 1 with a first drive axle front differential 2, a torque transfer case 3, a primary rear axle 4 with associated differential 5, a rear clutch 6, and ~~an~~ a second drive axle auxiliary rear axle 7 with associated rear differential 8. The transfer case 3 selectively transfers torque from the engine/transmission 9 to the front and rear axles 1, 4, 7.

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The rear clutch 6 disconnects the rear prop shaft drive train 10 from the rear axle 4 and rear differential 5. However, absent any other disconnect mechanism the prop shaft 10, auxiliary rear axle 7, and auxiliary rear differential 8 continue to rotate due to back-driving caused by the auxiliary rear wheels drivingly connected to the auxiliary rear axle 7.

Referring now to FIG. 2, a dual disconnect differential assembly 2 and 8 (or mechanism) according to this invention is shown for the front axle 1 and the auxiliary rear axle 7 of a tandem or multi-axle vehicle such as shown in FIG. 1.

Please amend page 6, lines 11 through page 7, line 13 as follows:

The dual disconnect differential assembly ~~10~~ 2 and 8 of this invention further includes a coaxial first (or left-hand) output shaft 24 and a second (or right-hand) output shaft 25. These output shafts 24, 25 extend transversely and are coaxial with side gears 20, 21. These output shafts 24, 25 extend from inboard ends near cross pin 16 to outboard ends, which extend outside the differential housing. Splines 26, 27 are provided at the inboard ends of output shafts for

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driving the same. Joints or flanges 28, which may be conventional (e.g., universal joints), are provided at respective outboard ends of output shafts 24, 25 and extend transversely outwardly to wheels (not shown) at the sides of the vehicle.

According to one important aspect of this invention, the first and second axle shafts 24, 25 are interconnected and axially slidable together as a unit. In other words, the present invention preferably provides a linking member 29 in the form of a linking interconnecting rod or other suitable member that extends through the differential assembly to connect the two axle shafts 24, 25. With this arrangement, the invention provides simultaneous axial movement of the axle shafts to thereby mutually disconnect the first and second axle shafts 24, 25 from the first and second side gears 20, 21. In the embodiment of Figures 2 and 3, the linking rod passes through the cross pin 16. In the alternate embodiment of Figure 5, the linking member 129 takes the form of a connecting sleeve that connects the axle shafts 24, 25. In the arrangement of Figure 5, the cross pin 16 passes through the connecting sleeve 129 at apertures 130. In both illustrated designs, the two driven axle shafts 24, 25 are securely linked together to provide mutual linear sliding movement between the clutch engaged and disengaged positions.

The dual disconnect differential assembly of this invention includes a clutch mechanism for simultaneously placing both output shafts 24, 25 either into or out of driving engagement with respective side gears 20, 21. The splines 22, 23 on respective side gears 20, 21 form part of this clutch assembly or mechanism.